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Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

Statement submitted by World Trade Centers Association, an organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2008/100.

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Statement

The World Trade Centers Association Conference on Peace and Stability Through Trade was held with the assistance and sponsorship of DESA/ECOSOC in the Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium on 2 May 2008. This was the second instance of the conference; the first being held last year in the Oslo City Hall.

Sustainable development is necessary for peace and stability, and international trade is a powerful tool for sustainable development. Trade, by broadening markets and expanding supplier networks, is a particularly robust driver of sustainable development. Investments in production capacity are stabilized when there is a broad customer base and no dependence on any one market. Likewise, diversification of suppliers of components and raw materials contributes to sustainability by reducing sourcing vulnerabilities.

World Trade Centers through their efforts to increase two-way trade are economic development engines that have helped many regions to prosper. While the World Trade Centers Association, is a private, non-profit, non-political organization, the WTCA's member WTCs can be public, private, quasi-public, non-profit, for profit, individuals, partnerships or corporations. Despite their structural and operational variation, they are all united in their commitment to developing trade as a means toward peace and stability. Though the WTCA has pursued this goal since it's inception in 1970, after 11 September 2001 when the New York World Trade Center was destroyed, the members of the WTCA have been more dedicated to this aspect of our mission.

There were several goals for this conference:

1. To raise awareness that trade can be an effective tool in ensuring peace and encouraging stability;

2. To build relationships and explore collaborative opportunities for the WTCA and its members with development-oriented organizations both within and outside the United Nations;

3. To pursue and investigate partnerships for projects applying the trade development capabilities of the WTCA and its 316 members worldwide, working through the WTCA's newly formed WTCA Foundation;

4. To engage the business community and encourage dialogue on the developmental power of international trade; and

5. To inspire World Trade Centers around the world to continue their work with the understanding that by fostering trade they are building peace.

To build upon the success of the event WTCA will:

1. Pursue media coverage of this issue as well as this specific event;

2. Will support the efforts of other WTCs around the world that wish to organize similar events;

3. Plan to organize the third edition of this event in Spring 2009, location to be discussed;

4. Continue collaborative discussions with H. E. Francisco Lorenzo of the Dominican Republic and others toward participation in the MDG Summit; and

5. Evaluate proposals for projects in Palestine, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Afghanistan and Iraq that can illustrate the Peace and Stability Through Trade concept.